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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6742  
INFO RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0384  
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RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 5489  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4000  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1319  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 7961  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 5605  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2297  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 001216

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS AND SCA/RA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/04/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [MV](#)

SUBJECT: MALDIVES: FINAL REFERENDUM RESULTS ANNOUNCED, BUT  
NOT ACCEPTED

REF: A. COLOMBO 1186

[B](#). COLOMBO 1166

[C](#). COLOMBO 1161

Classified By: Ambassador Robert O. Blake, Jr., for reasons 1.4(b,d).

[1](#). SUMMARY: On August 28, the Election Commission announced the final results of the August 18 referendum to decide on Maldives' future system of governance. 95,619 voters endorsed the presidential system, while 58,504 supported the parliamentary system. The final results do not require the approval of the Special Majlis, the constituent assembly tasked with drafting a new constitution by November 30. The opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), however, continues to argue that the vote was rigged, and on September 1 gathered to protest the final results. Meanwhile, the Special Majlis remains bogged down with the referendum and has made little, if any, recent progress on drafting the new constitution. End Summary.

[2](#). (U) The Election Commission announced the final results of the August 18 referendum to decide on Maldives' future system of governance on August 28. According to the Commission's figures, 95,619 voters endorsed the presidential systems, while 58,504 supported the parliamentary system. Election Commissioner K.D. Ahmed Maniku noted that 78 percent of the 199,841 eligible voters participated. Out of the 154,123 votes cast, 1,767 were considered void for "various reasons," according to the Maldivian press. On August 26, prior to release of the final results, the Maldives Human Rights Commission declared the vote "generally fair," adding that the referendum was the "freest and fairest vote the Maldives has ever witnessed." The final results do not require the approval of the Special Majlis, the constitutional assembly tasked with drafting a new constitution by November 30.

[3](#). (U) The opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) continues to argue that the vote was rigged and has accused the Human Rights Commission of "willful deception of the public" for its statements supporting the vote. On September 1, the MDP gathered to protest the final results. Maldivian police dispersed the crowd and briefly detained 15 people, including MDP Chairperson Mohamed Nasheed and MDP President Mohamed Munavvar.

¶4. (C) The Special Majlis remains bogged down with the referendum. On September 3, the Special Majlis decided, despite opposition complaints, that the 11-member committee responsible for conducting a free and fair referendum was "not neglectful" in carrying out its mandate. According to one member, the opposition made a separate proposal to set up a 9-member committee to look into election complaints. The Government members disagreed, noting that the rules of the Special Majlis required all complaints to be handled by the Civil Court. The Court, however, has refused to accept the case. Meanwhile, the Special Majlis has been unable to maintain a quorum long enough to accomplish any new drafting.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: With the final results in, the MDP's insistence on contesting the results is futile. Even the MDP privately admits that any "rigging" that took place probably did not affect the outcome. At this point, all sides would be best served by working to meet the November 30 deadline for finishing the draft constitution. A victory on that front would serve to reinvigorate the lagging reform process generally. The increasingly despondent opposition seems, however, to be intent on playing out the role of spoiler.  
BLAKE